

# ***The Mendon Public Library***

## ***Selection/Evaluation/ Reconsideration Policy For the Mendon Library Collection***

***The Mendon Public Library Board of Trustees, accepting their charge from the community to be policy makers and guide the Mendon Public Library into future service for the community have developed the following policies and procedures concerning the collection at the Mendon Public Library. The policies contained in this document were formed after much review, discussion, and soul searching. It is our hope you will carefully consider all the statements contained in this document.***

*Approved 8/3/99 Mendon Public Library Board of Trustees*

# **Table of Contents**

<i>Purpose</i> .....	3
<i>Mission Statement for the Mendon Public Library</i> .....	4
<i>Mission Statement for the Monroe County Library System.</i> .....	4
<i>Vision For the Mendon Public Library</i> .....	4
<i>Responsibilities for Selection of Material</i> .....	5
<i>Material Selection for the Collection</i> .....	5
<i>Specific Criteria for Selection:</i> .....	5
<i>Selection Sources</i> .....	6
<i>Evaluation of Material</i> .....	6
<i>Non-Print Materials</i> .....	7
<i>Special Collections Policy</i> .....	8
<i>Reconsideration Procedures</i> .....	8
<i>Reconsideration Request</i> .....	10
<i>Gift Policy</i> .....	13
<i>Library Gift Request Form</i> .....	14
<i>Appendix A – Library Bill of Rights</i> .....	15
<i>Appendix B – Freedom to Read</i> .....	15
<i>Appendix C – Freedom to View</i> .....	20
<i>Appendix D – Freedom of Access to Libraries for Minors</i> .....	21
<i>Appendix E – Access for Children and Young People to Videotapes and Other Nonprint Formats: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights</i> .....	22
<i>Appendix F – Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.</i> .....	23
Equity of Access .....	25
Information Resources and Access .....	25

## *Purpose*

The library is a public institution to serve the whole community of Mendon. The Mendon Public Library Board of Trustees takes this charge very seriously. For this reason, this document will serve two purposes:

- To serve as a standard for the librarian(s) in selecting and reviewing materials for the Mendon Public Library collection.
- To inform the residents of the Town of Mendon the scope of the Mendon Library collection and to explain the standards and criteria the library uses when selecting materials for the Mendon Library collection.
- To provide a means of communication between the library and community regarding the collection of the Mendon Public Library.

In order to fully understand this document, please review the document as a whole; one section depends on another section. It is our hope you will consider this policy in its entirety.

## ***Mission Statement for the Mendon Public Library***

Mendon Public Library is an essential, life-long educational resource for the Town of Mendon. It provides access to educational and recreational material from its own collection and from the Monroe County Library Systems, providing items of current interest for all, creating a door to knowledge, and supporting users of every age with independent study sources.

*Approved 1/95*

## ***Mission Statement for the Monroe County Library System.***

The Monroe County Library System is a coalition of member libraries that provides materials and programs to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of individuals, member libraries and local governments through 1) collaborative ventures for cost effective delivery of quality services; 2) centralized delivery of selected services; 3) the fostering of fast, accurate access to materials and services in a seamless, consistent and uniform manner.

*Approved 1/98*

## ***Vision For the Mendon Public Library***

The Mendon Public Library is an essential contributor to the enriched quality of life to the town of Mendon and the village of Honeoye Falls. It provides delivery of customer focused services through its cooperation with other member libraries.

## ***Responsibilities for Selection of Material***

The ultimate responsibility for selection of materials rests with the Library Board of Trustees. That responsibility is delegated by the Board to the Director of the Library and the other professional librarians on the staff.

## ***Material Selection for the Collection***

The following documents will supplement and clarify board approved policy statements:

- First amendment of the *U.S. Constitution* – “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances” (*The Bill of Rights to the US Constitution* was ratified on December 15, 1791)
- *The Library Bill of Rights* by the American Library Association –see Appendix A
- *Freedom to Read* by the American Library Association -see Appendix B
- *Freedom to View* by the American Library Association – see Appendix C
- *Freedom of Access to Libraries for Minors* – by the American Library Association – see Appendix D.

## ***Specific Criteria for Selection:***

When the Mendon Public Library selects materials for the collection, they consider several factors. Among these factors are:

(They are not necessarily in priority order):

- Artistic quality and style
- Content - Accuracy and timeliness of material
- Credibility of author
- Demand
- Literary style appropriate to subject matter and intended audience
- Material presented in an informative manner
- Price
- Quality of content - expression, illustrations, organization, indexes
- Quality of physical format and construction

- Relevance of the material to the whole collection
- Relevance to the library's objectives
- Reputation of publisher
- Technical quality regarding non-print materials

\* These are not necessarily in priority order

## *Selection Sources*

The Mendon Public Library has access to a number of sources that may be used when selecting materials. Some of these sources include:

### *Review Media*

- The Library currently subscribes to:
  1. *The School Library Journal*
  2. *Voice of Youth Advocates*
  3. *Library Journal*
  4. *New York Times Book Review*
  5. *The Horn Book*

### *Publishers Announcements.*

- The Library currently subscribes to:
  1. *Publishers Weekly*
  2. *Forecast*
  3. *TIPS* selection list from Brodart
- To aid the library in having a well-rounded collection, the Mendon Public Library may use the *Public Library Catalog* and the *Fiction Catalog*, located in the reference section of the library.
- To keep our popular fiction collection current the library will use the *New York Times Bestseller List* as an indication of popular fiction titles for the collection. Online sources may also be consulted, such as [amazonbooks.com](http://amazonbooks.com).
- The library will also consider suggestions from the public as they meet our selection criteria policy.
- The Mendon Public Library may use the services of the MCLS Consultants services when making selection decisions for the library.

## *Evaluation of Material*

In order to maintain a current and useful collection for the Mendon Public Library the collection will be evaluated. Discarding books from a collection that has been put together with care and experience is a difficult procedure. However it is necessary and

must be done on a regular basis. Materials will not be considered candidates for discard because they may be controversial to members of the community. Some criteria the Mendon Public Library will use in evaluation of the collection include:

- *Condition* – books that are shabby and unattractive should be removed and replaced, if in print. If the books are out-of-print and still needed, they should be mended, if possible, or replaced with newer material on the same subject.
- *Dated material* – books on states and countries, various branches of science and technology, biographies of contemporary figures, etc. should be discarded when dated and inaccurate.
- *Decreased Demand* – books that circulate infrequently should be considered for discard, but this should not be the decisive factor in making the decision. Standard lists of/or various subject bibliographies should be consulted and future use considered.
- *Multiple Copies* – When a popular multiple copy of a book is no longer in high demand, multiple copies will be discarded.
- *Improper Procurement* -If a copy of a book is mistakenly sent or ordered, every effort will be made to correct the mistake and obtain the requested copy.
- *Space Constraints* - Because of current space constraints, some sections will have to be reviewed on a regular basis. It is our hope this current space crisis is not a permanent state of the Mendon Public Library.
- *Technical Problems* -If non-book formats have technical difficulties that cannot be repaired in a minimal amount of time they will be discarded. In the case of audiocassettes, Talking books less than one year old or still very popular, replacement tapes will be requested to keep the item in circulation.

## ***Non-Print Materials***

The Mendon Public Library's non-print collection contains the following formats: Audio Cassettes, VHS Cassettes, Talking Books, CD-ROMs, Music CDs, and Computer Databases. Other new formats will be added as technology, budget and demand permits. When selecting non print resources the same criteria and selection process will be applied to both print and non-print materials wherever possible.

In the case of some new technology (Internet access), the Mendon Public Library has no control over the materials contained within the network. The Library staff does not monitor its use but does encourage parents to take responsibility for their children's use.

(See also Appendix E – *Access for Children and Young People to Videotapes and Other Nonprint Formats: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, Appendix F - *Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* and Appendix G – *Mendon Public Library Internet Policy*)

## ***Special Collections Policy***

It is the Mendon Public Library's policy not to label a special collection as such. All the proceeding policies and procedures apply to the whole collection of the Mendon Public Library.

## ***Reconsideration Procedures***

The library purposely selects materials for diversified readership. Every patron will not agree with every purchase the library makes. While each item has been selected carefully, based on specific criteria, the library realizes questions may arise as to the appropriateness of materials for the collection. The Director and the Library Board will listen to the concerns of the patrons in an effort to build an appropriate collection for the Mendon Library. The Library Board asks that you follow the following procedures when addressing a concern.

- Complaints regarding library materials should be referred to the librarian who was responsible for the selection of the material involved.
- Every effort will be made to keep the case of the item in question in as much confidence as possible until after a decision has been made. The library staff and Board of Trustees will treat every question with professional courtesy and confidentiality.
- The librarian will respond to patron. When preparing a response the librarian will consider the following documents: *Mendon Public Library Materials Selection Policy*, *Library Bill of Rights* (appendix A) and the *Freedom to Read Statement* (appendix B) of the American Library Association. Reference should also be made to the role of the parent in selecting materials for his/her child. In addition, the selection librarian will support the purchase with copies of reviews and other materials used in making the selection for the library.
- If the patron still wishes to pursue the complaint, the selection librarian will have the patron complete a Request for Reconsideration Form and inform the patron that the matter will be referred to the Director. The selection librarian will brief the Director



and provide a detailed written report along with the Reconsideration Form. Following careful consideration, the Director will respond to the patron.

- If the problem is still not resolved, the matter will be presented to the Board of Trustees in written form. The Library Board of Trustees then can decide whether to invite the patron to discuss the appropriateness of the material or whether to handle the matter by letter.
- Final decision rests with the Mendon Public Library Board of Trustees.

## ***Reconsideration Request***

**The Mendon Public Library  
15 Monroe Street  
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472  
Phone: (716) 624-6067**

July 19, 1999

The staff and Board of Trustees of the Mendon Public Library realize that the world is filled with controversy. We also realize that the library, acting to serve the residents of the community of Mendon by mirroring the world, may add materials to its collection which may be controversial. For this reason, we are providing a procedure for the public to register any criticism of library materials. Please fill out the attached form "Patron Complaint Regarding Library Materials". No comment will be considered without name, address and phone number included.

The Library Board will be provided with a copy of your comments. You will be notified of the date of the next Board of Trustees meeting when your views will be addressed under "other business". You are welcome to attend. It is expected that you will read the attached materials. (*Library Bill of Rights, The Freedom to Read Statement* and the *Mendon Public Library Collection Development Policy*) before attending, so you will be familiar with the policies of the Library.

Please notify the Library Director if you plan to attend.

---

Lynn Shipe, President  
Board of Trustees  
Mendon Public Library

---

Laurie Guenther, Director  
Mendon Public Library

Attachments:

1. Patron Complaints Regarding Library Materials Form
2. *Mendon Public Library Collection Development Policy*
3. *Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix A)
4. *Freedom to Read Statement* (Appendix B)
5. *Access to Electronic Information Services and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix F)

**PATRON COMPLAINT REGARDING LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent yourself \_\_\_\_\_ Organization (name) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you read or listen to the entire work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you believe is the theme of this work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you believe is of value in this work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do you object to this material? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. To what, specifically, do you object? Please cite a specific page number where possible. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you feel would be the effect of this work on the individual? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you know of other material(s) on the same theme which you feel would be of more value? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please list \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you feel that your request for review is consistent with the Library Bill of Rights, and the Mendon Public Library selection policy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. If you have additional comment, please use the reverse side.

## *Gift Policy*

Donations of money and/or materials to the Mendon Public Library or to its Endowment Fund are both welcomed and encouraged. Final acceptance of the gift resides with the Mendon Public Library Board of Trustees.

Generally, materials that carry restrictions which necessitate special treatment or which prevent integration of the gift into either the operation of the library or the library collection will not be accepted. Limitations of space, staff time and processing cost are additional considerations that may impact the decision to accept gifts of materials.

In order to be clear on the conditions of the gift, a Library Gift Request Form must accompany all gifts donated to the Mendon Public Library.

Donated gifts automatically become the property of the Mendon Public Library and may be disposed of at any time in accordance with any donor restrictions and with State Laws.

Gifts made in memory or honor of individuals are encouraged. The selection of such materials may be left to the Director of the Library or Library Board of Trustees. The donor may suggest a particular item or subject area. The appropriateness of the gift must be in accordance with the Collection Development Policy of the Mendon Public Library and the State Laws of New York. Appropriate book plates may be placed in these items indicating that they were donated in honor of, or in memory of, an individual.

***Library Gift Request Form***

***Mendon Public Library  
Memorial Gift Form***

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Check Received:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Gift (Adult Book, Juvenile Book, Video, Music, CD etc.)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Recommended Topic:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of or Given by:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Person/Family to notify when item arrives:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***Appendix A – Library Bill of Rights***

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve. They should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948  
Amended February 2, 1981,  
June 27, 1967  
January 23, 1996  
ALA Council

## ***Appendix B – Freedom to Read***

The Freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label “controversial” books, to distribute

lists of “objectionable” books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be “protected” against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our



democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility,

they can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

Adopted June 25, 1953  
Revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991  
By the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom  
to Read Committee

## *Appendix C – Freedom to View*

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989. American Film and Video Association is no longer in existence.

Endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990.

Reprinted by permission of the American Library Association

## ***Appendix D – Freedom of Access to Libraries for Minors***

Library policies and procedures which effectively deny minors equal access to all library resources available to other users violate the *Library Bill of Rights*. The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials, and facilities based on age of library users.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states, “ A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.” The “right to use a library” includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.

Libraries are charged with the mission of developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities which fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis. Librarians cannot predict what resources will best fulfill the needs and interests of any individual user based on a single criterion such as chronological age, level of education, or legal emancipation,.

The selection and development of library resources should not be diluted because of minors having the same access to library resources as adult users. Institutional self-censorship diminishes the credibility of the library in the community, and restricts access for all library users.

Librarians and governing bodies should not resort to age restrictions on access to library resources in an effort to avoid actual or anticipated objections from parents or anyone else. The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries do not authorize librarians or governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents or legal guardians. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents and only parents – have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children – and only their children – to library resources. Parents or legal guardians, who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials or facilities, should so advise their children. Librarians and governing bodies cannot assume the role of parents or the functions of parental authority in the private relationship between parent and child. Librarians and governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users.

Librarians have a professional commitment to ensure that all members of the community they serve have free and equal access to the entire range of library resources regardless of content, approach, format, or amount of detail. This principle of library service applies

equally to all users, minors as well as adults. Librarians and governing bodies must uphold this principle in order to provide adequate and effective service to minors.

Adopted June 30, 1972  
Amended July 1, 1981  
July 3, 1991  
ALA Council

## ***Appendix E – Access for Children and Young People to Videotapes and Other Nonprint Formats: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights***

Library collections of videotapes, motion pictures, and other nonprint formats raise a number of intellectual freedom issues, especially regarding minors.

The interests of young people, like those of adults, are not limited by subject, theme, or level of sophistication. Librarians have a responsibility to ensure young people have access to materials and services that reflect diversity sufficient to meet their needs.

To guide librarians and others in resolving these issues, the American Library Association provides the following guidelines.

Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* says, “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.”

ALA’s Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights* states:

- The “Right to use a library” includes free access to, and unrestricted use of, all the services, materials, and facilities the library has to offer. Every restriction on access to, and use of, library resources, based solely on the chronological age, educational level, or legal emancipation of users violates Article V.
- ...[P]arents – and only parents – have the right and the responsibility to restrict the access of their children – and only their children – to library resources. Parents or legal guardians who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials or facilities, should so advise their children. Librarians and governing bodies have a public and professional obligation to provide equal access to all library resources for all library users.

Policies which set minimum age limits for access to videotapes and/or other audiovisual materials and equipment, with or without parental permission, abridge library use for minors. Further, age limits based on the cost of the materials are unacceptable. Unless directly and specifically prohibited by law from circulating certain motion pictures and

video productions to minors, librarians should apply the same standards to circulation of these materials as are applied to books and other materials.

Recognizing that libraries cannot act in loco parentis, ALA acknowledges and supports the exercise by parents of their responsibility to guide their own children's reading and viewing. Published reviews of films and videotapes and/or reference works which provide information about the content, subject matter, and recommended audiences can be made available in conjunction with nonprint collections to assist parents in guiding their children without implicating the library in censorship. This material may include information provided by video producers and distributors, promotional material on videotape packaging, and Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings if they are included on the tape or in the packaging by the original publisher and/or if they appear in review sources or reference works included in the library's collection. Marking out or removing ratings information from videotape packages constitutes expurgation or censorship.

MPAA and other rating services are private advisory codes and have no legal standing †. For the library to add such ratings to the materials if they are not already there, to post a list of such ratings with a collection, or to attempt to enforce such ratings through circulation policies or other procedures constitutes labeling, "an attempt to prejudice attitudes" about the material, and is unacceptable. The application of locally generated ratings schemes intended to provide content warnings to library uses is also inconsistent with the Library Bill of Rights.

† For information on case law, please contact the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom.

Adopted June 28, 1989  
Revised July 3, 1991  
ALA Council

## ***Appendix F – Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.***

### *Introduction*

The world is in the midst of an electronic communications revolution. Based on its constitutional, ethical, and historical heritage, American librarianship is uniquely positioned to address the broad range of information issues being raised in this revolution. In particular, librarians address intellectual freedom from a strong ethical base and an abiding commitment to the preservation of the individual's rights.

Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and the

corollary right to receive information. These rights extend to minors as well as adults. Libraries and librarians exist to facilitate the exercise of these rights by selecting, producing, providing access to, identifying, retrieving, organizing, providing instruction in the use of, and preserving recorded expression regardless of the format or technology.

The American Library Association expresses these basic principles of librarianship in its Code of Ethics and in the Library Bill of Rights and its Interpretations. These serve to guide librarians and library governing bodies in addressing issues of intellectual freedom that arise when the library provides access to electronic information, services, and networks.

Issues arising from the still-developing technology of computer-mediated information generation, distribution, and retrieval need to be approached and regularly reviewed from a context of constitutional principles and ALA policies so that fundamental and traditional tenets of librarianship are not swept away.

Electronic information flows across boundaries and barriers despite attempts by individuals, governments, and private entities to channel or control it. Even so, many people, for reasons of technology, infrastructure, or socio-economic status do not have access to electronic information.

In making decisions about how to offer access to electronic information, each library should consider its mission, goals, objectives, cooperative agreements, and the needs of the entire community it serves.

### *The Rights of Users*

All library system and network policies, procedures or regulations relating to electronic resources and services should be scrutinized for potential violation of user rights.

User policies should be developed according to the policies and guidelines established by the American Library Association, including Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations, and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities.

Users should not be restricted or denied access for expressing or receiving constitutionally protected speech. Users' access should not be changed without due process, including, but not limited to, formal notice and a means of appeal.

Although electronic systems may include distinct property rights and security concerns, such elements may not be employed as a subterfuge to deny users' access to information. Users have the right to be free of unreasonable limitations or conditions set by libraries, librarians, system administrators, vendors, network service providers, or others. Contracts, agreements, and licenses entered into by libraries on behalf of their



users should not violate this right. Users also have a right to information, training and assistance necessary to operate the hardware and software provided by the library.

Users have both the right of confidentiality and the right of privacy. The library should uphold these rights by policy, procedure, and practice. Users should be advised, however, that because security is technically difficult to achieve, electronic transactions and files could become public.

The rights of users who are minors shall in no way be abridged.

#### *Equity of Access*

Electronic information, services, and networks provided directly or indirectly by the library should be equally, readily and equitably accessible to all library users. American Library Association policies oppose the charging of user fees for the provision of information services by all libraries and information services that receive their major support from public funds (50.3; 53.1.14; 60.1; 61.1). It should be the goal of all libraries to develop policies concerning access to electronic resources in light of Economic Barriers to Information Access: an Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights and Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities.

#### *Information Resources and Access*

Providing connections to global information, services, and networks is not the same as selecting and purchasing material for a library collection. Determining the accuracy or authenticity of electronic information may present special problems. Some information accessed electronically may not meet a library's selection or collection development policy. It is, therefore, left to each user to determine what is appropriate. Parents and legal guardians who are concerned about their children's use of electronic resources should provide guidance to their own children.

Libraries and librarians should not deny or limit access to information available via electronic resources because of its allegedly controversial content or because of the librarian's personal beliefs or fear of confrontation. Information retrieved or utilized electronically should be considered constitutionally protected unless determined otherwise by a court with appropriate jurisdiction.

Libraries, acting within their mission and objectives, must support access to information on all subjects that serve the needs or interests of each user, regardless of the user's age or the content of the material. Libraries have an obligation to provide access to government information available in electronic format. Libraries and librarians should not deny access to information solely on the grounds that it is perceived to lack value.

In order to prevent the loss of information, and to preserve the cultural record, libraries may need to expand their selection or collection development policies to ensure preservation, in appropriate formats, of information obtained electronically.

Electronic resources provide unprecedented opportunities to expand the scope of information available to users. Libraries and librarians should provide access to information presenting all points of view. The provision of access does not imply sponsorship or endorsement. These principles pertain to electronic resources no less than they do to the more traditional sources of information in libraries.

Adopted by the ALA Council, January 24, 1996



***INTERNET POLICY FOR MENDON PUBLIC LIBRARY***

The Mendon Public Library is in agreement with the Monroe County Library System Internet Policy Statement and with the Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS from the American Library Association.

Internet, as provided by the Monroe County Library System, enables the Town of Mendon Public Library to provide electronic information beyond the confines of its collection. It allows access to ideas, information and commentary from around the globe.

Introduction of Internet as an information resource allows Mendon Public Library to considerably enhance our existing print and electronic resources. These resources, accessible through the Library terminals, are provided equally to all library users.

Currently Internet is an unregulated medium. Thus, while it offers access to a wealth of excellent material, it also offers access to materials which may be offensive or disturbing.

Our library does not control or monitor material which may be accessible via Internet. Therefore, all customers of The Mendon Public Library are advised that Mendon Public Library and its agents cannot be held responsible for what may be accessed via the library's on-line catalog terminals which include Internet access.

Mendon Public Library upholds and affirms the right of each individual to access constitutionally protected material.

Mendon Public Library also affirms the right and responsibility of parents and legal guardians to monitor their minor children's use of library materials and resources, including Internet access. Parents are strongly encouraged to assist their minor children in their use of Internet resources.

Resources to assist the public in accessing Internet will be provided in print form and via group or individual training as staffing and volunteer support permits.

Questions on approved Library Board policies should be addressed first to the Library Director, and thereafter, to the Library Board of Trustees.

*Laurie Guenther  
Library Director  
approved 5/7/96*

*Reviewed and Approved by the Mendon Public Library Board of Trustees 5/4/99*